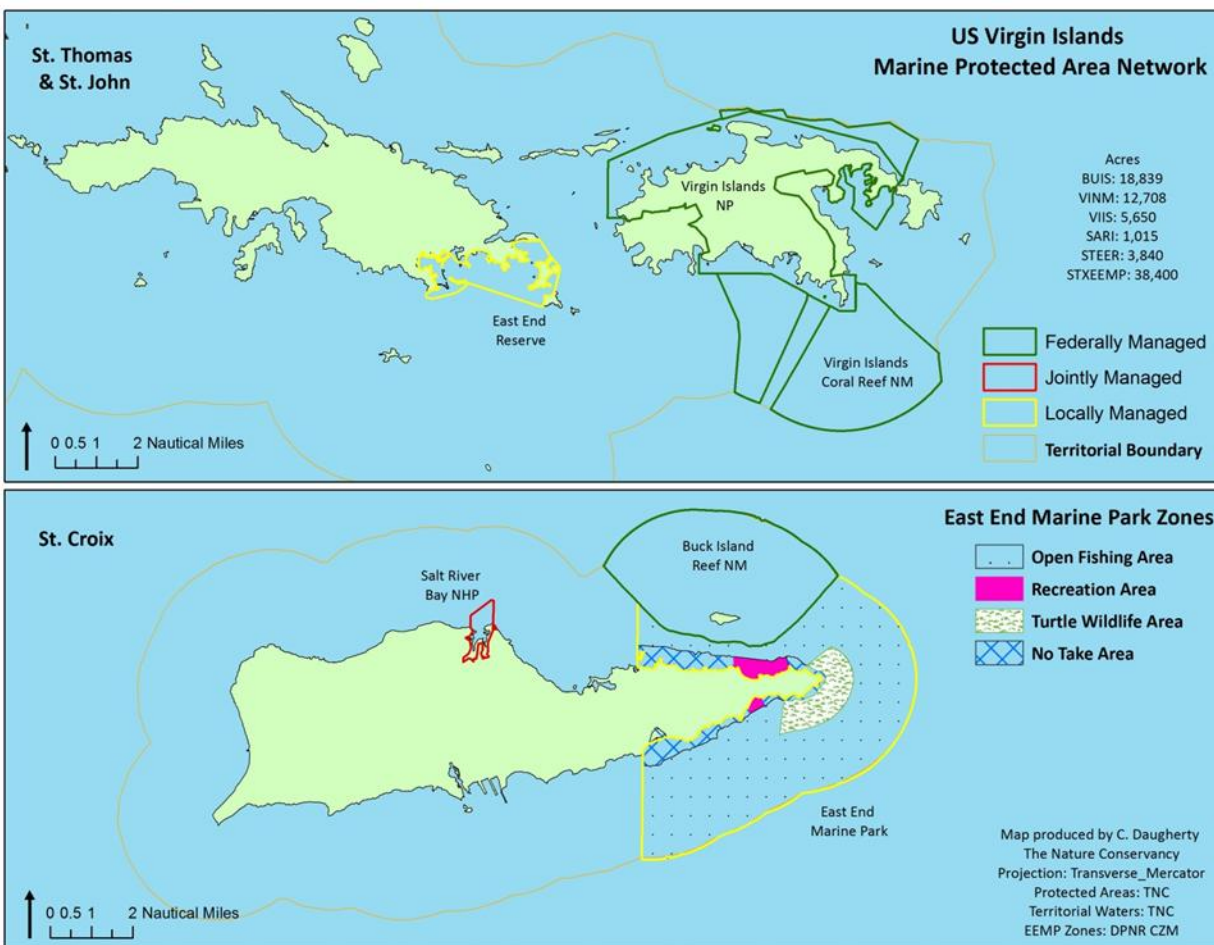


VIMPAN

U.S. Virgin Islands Marine Protected Area Network

Coordination Framework





Map of the USVI MPAs belonging to the National System of MPAs

Funding

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Introduction

In March 2012, protected area managers formed the Virgin Islands Marine Protected Area Network (VIMPAN) to increase effectiveness of ocean resource protection through improved interagency coordination, communication and collaboration between the Virgin Islands Department of Planning and Natural Resources (VIDPNR), the National Park Service (NPS) and other supporting partners. Together, these managers find solutions to common challenges and ease implementation by pooling resources and working collaboratively. The Nature Conservancy has served as a member and primary coordinator of VIMPAN working to increase the group's ability to improve reef protection by convening meetings, hosting webinars and organizing events to facilitate collaboration, planning, policy development and public outreach. Consisting of the six US Virgin Islands (USVI) marine protected areas (MPAs) that belong to the National System of MPAs, this network forms the first of its kind in the territory to unify efforts, share information, improve MPA effectiveness and implement reef resiliency actions on an ecosystem scale.

The National Park Service MPAs included in VIMPAN are:

- Buck Island Reef National Monument (BUIS), St. Croix
- Salt River Bay National Historical Park and Ecological Preserve (SARI), St. Croix
- VI Coral Reef National Monument (VICR), St. John
- VI National Park (VIIS), St. John

The MPAs managed by the territory include:

- St. Croix East End Marine Park (STXEEMP) managed by the VIDPNR Division of Coastal Zone Management (CZM)
- St. Thomas East End Reserve (STEER) managed by the VIDPNR Divisions Fish and Wildlife (DFW) and CZM. Please see Appendix A for site profiles of these MPAs.

The VIMPAN Steering Group includes managers from the six core MPAs as well as other key decision-makers from the territory:

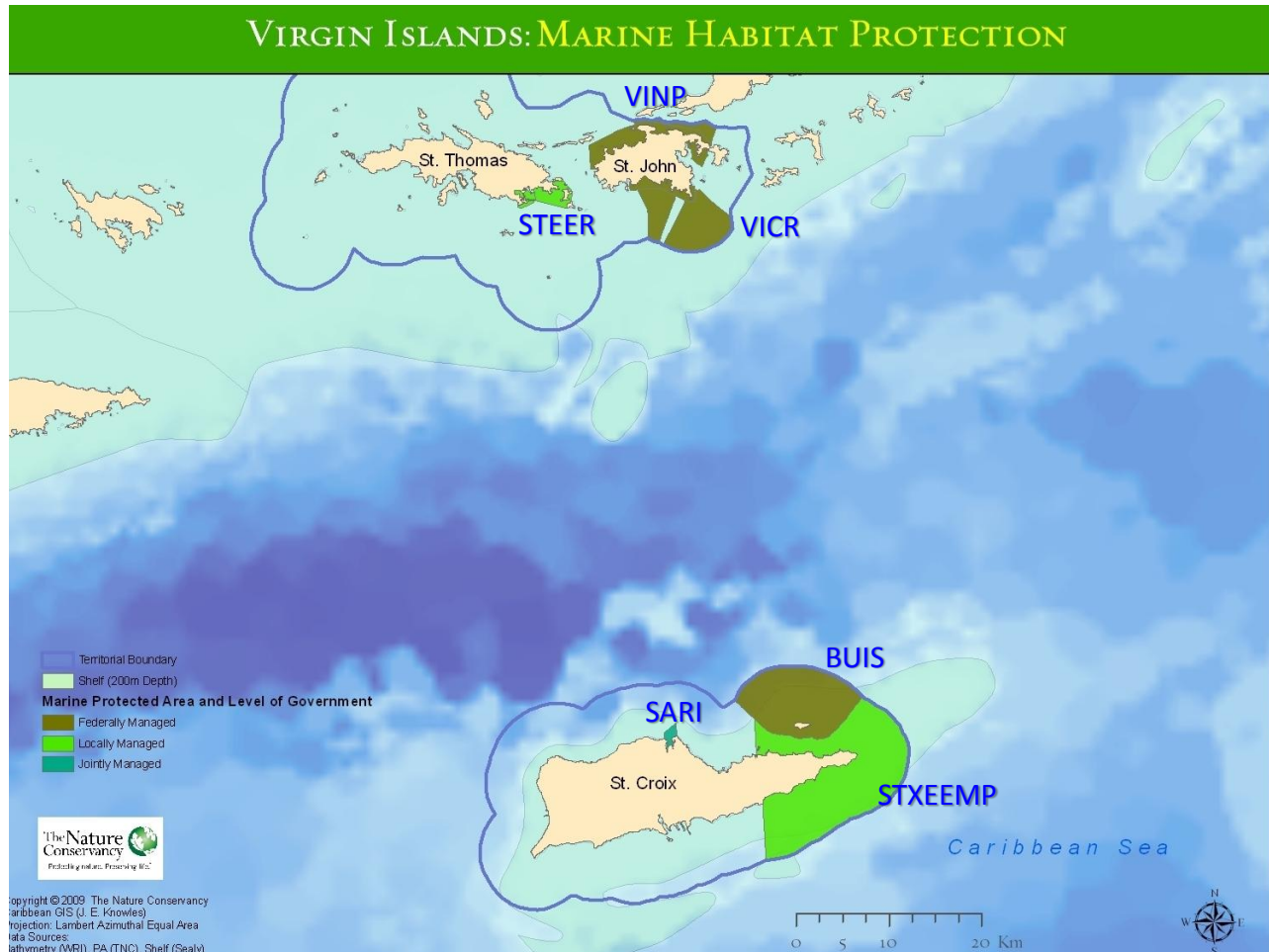
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Jamie Kilgo, Biological Science Technician, NPS- BUIS & SARI
Thomas Kelly, Biologist, NPS -VICR & VIIS
Brian Fitzgerald, Superintendent, NPS -VICR & VIIS

Original members, now retired or removed due to change or position:

Mark Hardgrove, Superintendent, NPS -VICR & VIIS

Rafe Boulon, Chief of Resources Management, NPS -VICR & VIIS

Alex Holecek, APC Coordinator, CZM DPNR



Map of the USVI MPAs belonging to the National System of MPAs

The Coordination Framework was drafted using information and input provided in one-on-one interviews with MPA managers followed by three coordination framework workshops. The purpose of the interviews was to identify mutual issues, concerns, and activities among USVI MPAs (see Appendix B for a summary of the responses in the interviews). Common responses and other background information provided a foundation for this document. Then, in March and April 2012, MPA managers from around the territory met to discuss strategies for USVI MPAs to increase communication, coordination and collaboration to maximize efficiency and effectiveness of addressing targeted issues of mutual concern to the community and the territory (see Appendix C for agendas and workshop materials).

The Coordination Framework will serve as a catalyst for achieving a new level of regional ocean and coastal resource management. It contains the overall vision for the VIMPAN, a mission statement, and goals and objectives for the network. Concurrently, a Memorandum of Agreement is being drafted between the VIMPAN members to provide a formalization of the group's collaboration (Appendix D). Over time, specific implementation plans will be developed by the Steering Group for the following areas of collaboration:

Education and outreach of the VIMPAN to the public
Policy, planning and fundraising
Enforcement
Biophysical and social monitoring and other research

Partners

The Nature Conservancy's Jeanne Brown (Coastal Program Director) and Collin Daugherty (Conservation Planner) facilitated the workshops. Significant input and advice came from Ryan Young, the MPA Project Specialist with the Rookery Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve who led a similar initiative for the Gulf of Mexico MPA Network. Other VIMPAN partners include the University of the Virgin Islands (Marcia Taylor), St. Croix Environmental Association (Carol Cramer-Burke and Lynnea Roberts), NOAA (Lia Ortiz), Sugarmill Media, LLC.

PART I: VI Marine Protected Area Network Coordination

Vision

1. *To cooperatively conserve and restore shared resources across a system of MPAs and to raise awareness and foster stewardship of these areas to ensure the quality of life and economy for the USVI community, culture and environment.*
2. *A joint network of marine protected areas for the conservation and restoration of marine resources for the benefit and stewardship of the USVI and future generations.*

Mission

1. *To establish interagency relationships and create opportunities for cohesive marine protected area management, collective environmental planning and response that will address common challenges and inspire action and build community support.*
2. *To improve coordination, cooperation, communication, and collaboration among USVI marine protected areas by creating opportunities for collective environmental planning and response; information sharing; leveraging resources; and conveying a common message.*

Benefits

USVI MPA network members receive benefits through collaboration and coordination with other USVI MPAs including being part of a system that can attract interest and investment, and bolster opportunities with a regional focus. Managers can benefit from the sharing of resources and knowledge, learn about different solutions to common problems, increase capacity through collaboration and jointly funded projects, and save time by coordinating effort with fellow MPAs in the USVI network.

Further benefits to the USVI MPA network include:

- Ability to cross political and jurisdictional boundaries by looking at ecosystem level issues
- Builds collaboration amongst agencies
- Enable linkages between MPAs sharing staff, resources and education and outreach materials and products
- Increased communication among USVI MPAs, sharing ideas and experiences
- Unified voice on particular issues and consistent messaging across territory MPAs
- Formalized collaborations to justify working together
- Homogenized approaches for education and outreach, moorings system, monitoring, etc.
- Increased opportunity for professional development for MPA staff
- Eligibility for specific funding opportunities with more visibility to partners

- Enhanced funding competitiveness and success by demonstrating collaboration and in-kind support
- Streamline research permitting and results dissemination
- Learn from other MPAs and other MPA networks (different solutions to common problems)
- Improve the overall social benefit of MPAs, link economic vitality with tourism

USVI MPA Management Issues and Challenges

When asked to identify issues and topics of mutual concern for USVI MPAs several common themes were shared by the steering group:

- Insufficient enforcement capacity
- Management options in a climate of decreasing funding and capacity
- Watershed management issues
- Institutional inefficiencies
- Lack of political will/interest/awareness at the executive and legislative levels
- Retaining staff
- NPS is an easy target
- Reciprocity between MPAs for diving and boating
- Often have to wait for products, materials, studies, resources and other regional output to come from Puerto Rico

Goals and Objectives for VIMPAM

Goals and objectives were developed for VIMPAN over a timeframe of 1-5 years. A Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) between NPS and DPNR is one possible arrangement to outline the framework for the USVI MPA network. An MoA that describes the communication schedule (annual or bi-annual meetings) and justification for cooperative activities among USVI MPAs can initiate the collaboration between agencies on the shared goals and common issues facing USVI MPAs. Additional communication devices for the USVI MPA network will be explored, including a USVI MPA Network website with a variety of networking tools, newsletters, webinars, etc.

a. Goals¹

- Develop unified vision and approach for USVI MPAs**
- Formalize the group's identify and collaboration**

Obstacles to Creating a Regional Network:

- ❖ **Everyone is already too busy (who is going to do the work?)**
- ❖ Lack of formal framework for collaboration on MPA management
- ❖ **MPAs don't know enough about each other**
- ❖ Surmounting the institutional inefficiencies and lack of political will/interest/awareness at the executive and legislative levels

¹ Text in red indicates priority voted by Steering Group.

iii. Ignore geographic and institutional borders and focus on USVI-wide issues

iv. Improve interagency awareness of each other's MPA and share success stories

v. Strengthen a legacy of MPAs in the USVI

vi. To actively work together to continue legacy of USVI MPAs in the territory [to increase capacity & effectiveness too]

b. Objectives

1. Formalize VIMPAN by April, 2013.

VIMPAN is formalized as a group with a Memorandum of Agreement signed by the management agencies resulting in improved standing of the VIMPAN to political and organizational supporters and partners.

2. Establish USVI MPA Working Group by X.

Creation of working groups and/or steering committees for various issues being addressed by the Network by that will increase the number of strategies and actions implemented that benefit VIMPAN.

3. VIMPAN advocacy and communication.

As a group, take the opportunity to advocate for VIMPAN at least once per year to communicate with other organizations and networks. VIMPAN can communicate with other MPAs regarding opportunities to share resources by creating an accessible platform for Network communication and information sharing (e.g. website, webinars, conference calls, [site visits](#)) with a web site developed.

Outputs, Deliverable and Measures for VIMPAN

- 1) [Memorandum of Agreement](#)
- 2) [USVI MPA Network website](#): interactive, flash map, possible social media, etc. Consider use Gulf of Mexico MPA Network website as a model
- 3) [Demonstrated linkages and updated ways to collaborate](#)
- 4) [VIMPAN community calendar](#)

Immediate next steps for VIMPAM

- ☐ Develop the identity of VIMPAM for the MoA, Coordination Framework and communications strategy
- ☐ [Formalize MoA](#)
- ☐ [Have regular meetings, some of them as site visits \(every 3 months\)](#)

- ☐ Develop 5-year strategic plans for projects and activities for shared areas of collaboration: planning, fundraising, education and outreach, enforcement, biophysical monitoring and research (see PART II, below).
- ☐ VIMPAN will pool resources to bring on a graduate student to serve as the VIMPAN coordinator. Consider graduate students working through the MREC
- ☐ Reach out to partners- provide update to the VIMPAN

PART II: Areas of Collaboration

Collaboration Action Plans

The network will pool resources for policy, planning, and fundraising, communication and outreach, enforcement, biophysical monitoring and research. The following are examples

- Collaborative education, training and outreach plan
- Collaborative MPA research and monitoring plan
- Establish enforcement partnerships
- Institute MPA ranger exchanges
- Enhance regional MPA communication
- Regional disaster response plan

When asked to demonstrate the management and administrative linkages between the MPAs that currently exist, the steering group came up with several examples.

MPA COLLABORATION

Existing Regional Efforts

- Vital Signs Monitoring Plan
- Informal communication among USVI MPAs
- NPS resource sharing among NPS MPAs on needs basis
- USVI coral reef economic valuation study

Existing Interagency Collaboration

- VIIS NOAA Projects
- Adult fish connectivity with acoustic tagging, across borders
- Ron Hill conch tagging
- Brian D'Angeles shark research
- Mesophotic reef research with RSMAS
- Hurricane Hole circulation models- patterns in the bay (Sophia McKenzie at UVI)
- Andrew Baker and Illiana Baums doing genetic work with corals
- UVI-BUIS *Acropora* spp. monitoring

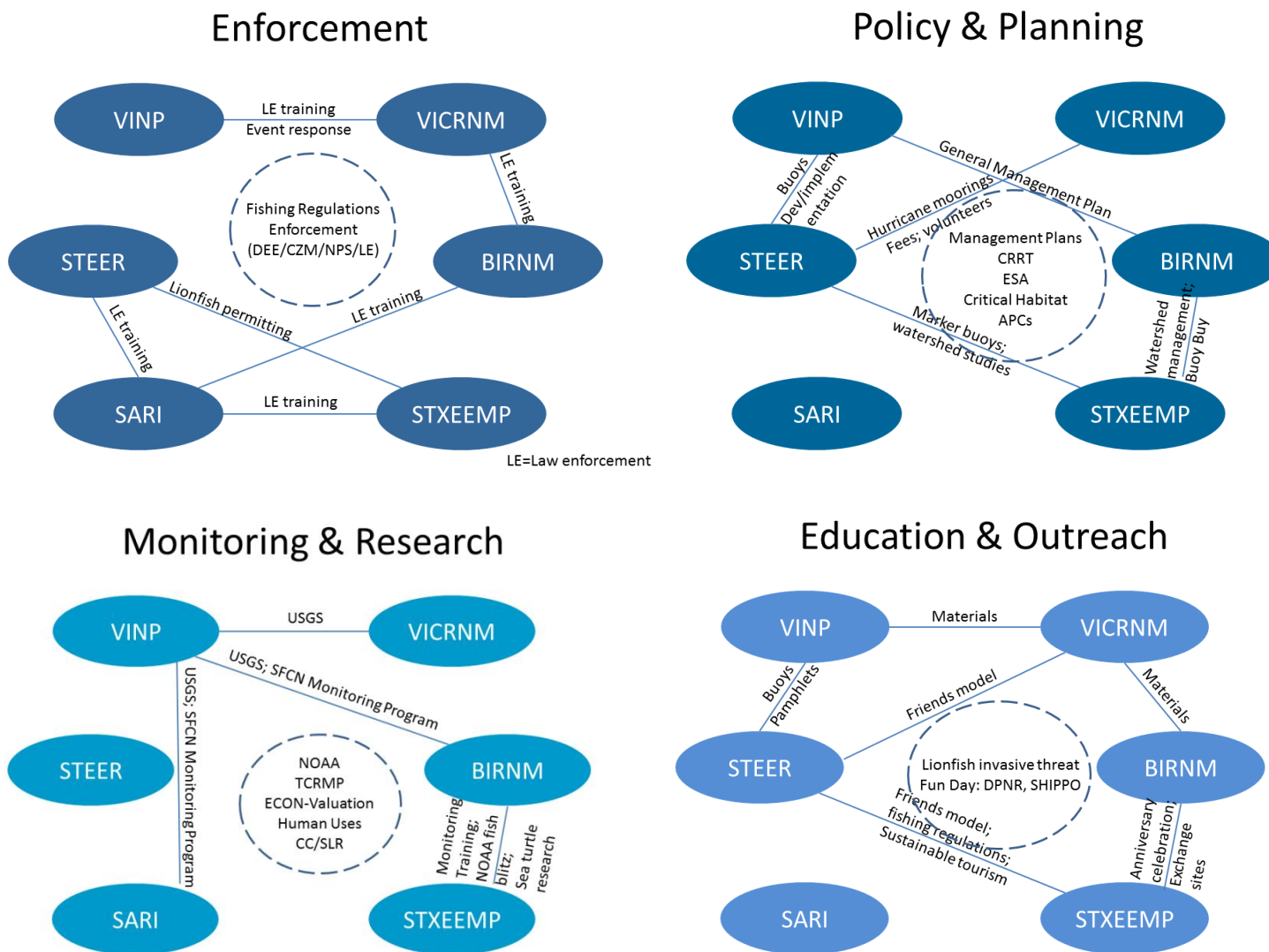


Figure 2. Current linkages between USVI MPAs

I. Communication and Outreach to the Public

VI MPA Network needs a smooth, unified and consistent message to demonstrate the connectivity, social benefit and shared ecosystem services to the public and politicians to improve buy-in and support for the MPAs. Rules, regulations, zones and buoy systems will be elucidated uniformly and made universally available.

a. Goals²

- i. Demonstrate the value of MPAs to the public incorporating annual value of beaches, coral, income to VI, fishes, turquoise water.
- ii. Have a more prominent presence in the education system
- iii. Build the legacy of the network for long-term support
- iv. Make use of existing resources in personnel and funding to create outreach materials
- v. People have positive experience visiting MPA
- vi. People are updated and informed about the activities, projects, results
- vii. People understand “MPA” and value and purpose

b. Objectives

- i. By the April workshop, a communications strategy is developed for all audiences and an education and outreach materials list created with dedicated personnel and funding
- ii. There is an increased appreciation of the value of MPAs and understanding of the network
- iii. MPA network activities have become part of regular work plans in management agencies
- iv. Reduction in amount of non-compliance activities in VIMPAN sites by half
- v. Education materials of network included in elementary schools education
- vi. “MPA” becomes a household term, and people can name an MPA

Issues and Challenges Outreach to the Public*

- ❖ How to get information to the general public
- ❖ How to give “MPA” a universal meaning
- ❖ Making rules and regulations accessible and understood
- ❖ Uniformity of messaging

**the public includes residents, MPA visitors (boaters, fishermen, snorkelers, etc.), the media, and agency and political leaders*

² Text in red indicates priority voted by Steering Group.

Outputs, Deliverable and Measures for Communications

- 1) Maps on GPS updated
- 2) Sticker of USVI MPAs for boaters at registration
- 3) USVI MPA Network poster (includes land facilities, some outreach e.g. 'leave paradise in its place')
- 4) Develop School Program
 - a. Education materials for elementary schools
 - b. Start in pilot school (probably a charter school)
 - c. Educators provide STEM requirements, connect dots to PIs
- 5) Demonstration of value of MPAs, include connectivity (lobster life cycle, turtles, drifters, conch deep water recruitment, etc.)
- 6) Marketing campaign
 - a. "Did you know...?"
 - b. Show goals reached
 - c. Showcase successes
 - d. Guidance and standards
- 7) Snorkel clinics
- 8) Coral conservation tour
- 9) Tap into UVI
 - a. Develop measures effectiveness

Immediate next steps for Communications

- ☐ Coordinate among outreach personnel on communications strategy
- ☐ Develop the USVI message
 - Universal signs with maps
 - Ridge to reef
 - What is 'MPA'? [value]
 - History
 - "Leave paradise in its place"
 - "MPAs for thicker fillets"
- ☐ Communicate the message at marinas, hotels, and dive shops
 - Communication strategy for each audience (tourism, general public, children, policy-makers)
- ☐ Develop USVI MPA Network map (no logos, uniform color code with uniform boundaries and buoys color schemes, zoning regulations, some outreach)
 - Webmap available at: www.VIMPAN.org (not yet)
- ☐ Identify areas for public relations of the USVI MPA network message
- ☐ Develop a volunteer clearing house

☐ Signs in airports, DMV

☐ Movies

☐ Social media

☐ Bar coasters

☐ PSAs (TV & radio)

☐ Google Earth

☐ Website

☐ Liquor marketing

☐ After hour chamber

[All of these should be worked on with tourism department and hotels]



VIMPAN Completed Communications Plan

Audience: Local Adults including Fishermen, Boaters, Public Policy Makers, and Locals as Visitors

Priority Activities (by rank)	Date to be Implemented	Timeframe to Implementation	Mechanisms for Implementation	Costs
1. Radio PSA	Scripted and recorded by December 21, 2012 To be aired dependent on funds	Prior to Dec 21	Scripted and recorded by M. Feltmate and J. Travis Published, dependent on funds, at area radio stations	Recorded \$1000.00 \$8 per 30sec ROS spot Station will match spots Minimum purchase per station (JKC, \$1050 for 262 spots on 6 stations for 3 months)
2. Social Media Campaign	Prior to 2012 year end	Prior to 2012 year end	Campaign to be implemented by Sugarmill Media utilizing information provided by VIMPAN Education and Outreach Consultants	Unknown
3. Talking Points Bulletin/ Summary Document	December 1, 2012	3 weeks	Written and published electronically by J. Travis and M. Feltmate	\$1000.00 Further printing/publishing costs pending future funding sources
4. Chamber of Commerce Events	Dependent on funding	40 hours preparation/ 6 hours implementation Date set at least three months in advance with CoCs	Designate a host(s) Plan dates with CoCs Build table setup—maps, Talking Points Bulletin, regulations handouts, useful giveaways, refreshments Develop lecture/discussion Host event	\$100 -\$1000.00 Dependent upon host designated—current VIMPAN employees, volunteers, contractor, mixed group—and upon program/setup developed Refreshments/giveaways possibly donated
5. Google Earth Updates	Prior to 2012 year end	Dependent on update schedule of Google; but will be set to be updated by	Contact Google Earth Send shapefiles Wait for update (Google Earth updates ever 1-4 years)	\$1600.00 for update coordinator

		2012 year end		
6. TV PSA	Dependent on future funding	4 weeks to 3 months dependent on funding and coordinator	Develop script Develop storyboard Utilize existing video footage Hire producer Fill holes with new video footage Publish	TV2 proposed building three minute PSAs at \$1200.00 for STXEEMP

II. Enforcement

a. Goals (to be determined)

b. Objectives

- i. Increase the knowledge, presence and effectiveness of patrolling, surveying and enforcing personnel in USVI MPAs by 2015 and thereby reduce the number of illegal or incompatible activities in and adjacent to USVI MPAs by 50%.

Outputs, Deliverable and Measures for Enforcement

(to be determined)

Immediate next steps for Enforcement (to be determined)

Issues and Challenges Enforcement

- ❖ Compliance
- ❖ Capacity
- ❖ Communication
- ❖ Uniformity of messaging

III. Biophysical and other Monitoring and Research

a. Goals

- i. Understand condition status by collecting data across ecosystems
- ii. Streamline research permits, one system, share results (use NPS online web application?)

b. Objectives (to be determined)

Outputs, Deliverable and Measures for Monitoring and Research

(to be determined)

Immediate next steps for Monitoring and Research

(to be determined)

Issues and Challenges Monitoring and Research

- ❖ Gap in information
- ❖ Showing benefits
- ❖ Response time
- ❖ Capacity

IV. Policy, Planning and Fundraising

a. Goals

- i. Model user fees to support MPAs/commercial use licenses, concessions
- ii. Commitment for jointly-funded projects (work charter?)
- iii. Surmount policy hurdles that prevent diving together

b. Objectives

- i. Increase awareness of funding/ pool of in-kind resources identified
- ii. Develop dive program that allows MPA network to dive together

Issues and Challenges Policy, Planning Fundraising

- ❖ Different agency mandates and procedures
- ❖ Reciprocity
- ❖ Concurrent jurisdiction agreement

Outputs, Deliverable and Measures for Planning and Fundraising

- 1) Proposals
- 2) Develop dive program

Immediate next steps for Planning and Fundraising

- ☐ Consult with DSOs (NOAA fisheries liason, NPS, TNC)
- ☐ Look at examples elsewhere (FL Keys, Guam, American Samoa, Hawaii)

The Road Ahead

Additional funding by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation or others will be needed to implement the key elements of the newly created USVI MPA Network focusing on enforcement trainings, network collaboration tools and outreach/training about the value of MPAs. The funding of the Project Coordinator will allow for the development of a regional framework and coordination mechanisms to better collaboration on a regional stewardship strategy to support science and training related to climate change, and the creation of training and awareness programs targeting protected area managers and stakeholders within USVI to increase the understanding of MPAs and encourage participation in the National System. The next steps identified in the meeting included emphasis on the creation of a communications strategy for USVI MPAs. This strategy will allow for the sharing of information, expertise, and opportunities between MPAs of various agencies, and strengthen access to information and buy-in among MPA staff, partners and stakeholders. Identifying functional structure for the network is also a priority. Working groups will be created for each focus area and they will begin to develop sustainable work plans with the intention of creating a lasting framework.

Acknowledgements

Ryan Young

The Gulf of Mexico MPA Network serves as a resource, being able to tap into their resources, taking into consideration and in some cases *replicating* what they have done highlights the notion of a network of MPAs beyond our regional boundaries.

Billy Causey

James Byrne

Mary Gleason

Charlie Wahle

Lauren Wenzel

National MPA Center

Madeline Yordan

Mark Hardgrove

Resources, Citations

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Appendices

Appendix A: USVI MPA Site Profiles

Appendix B: Survey Results of Pre-workshop Interviews

Appendix C: Agendas, List of Attendees and Output from March and April 2012 VIMPAN workshops

Appendix D: VIMPAN letter of support

Appendix E: VIMPAN Memorandum of Agreement (unsigned)

Appendix F: NFWF MPA Fund Final Programmatic Report

Appendix A: USVI MPA Site Profiles

Buck Island Reef National Monument (BUIS)

Established: 1961 (celebrating 50th anniversary this year)

Joined national MPA system: 2009 Charter member

Type of MPA (no-take, mixed use, etc.): no-take MPA

Size: 18,839 acres of submerged lands, 176 acre island

Management Plan status: Just went public with general management plan of BUIS. 8 years in the making!

Managed by: USNPS

Number of staff: 20 total staff shared across the three national parks on St. Croix including staff in resource management, research, maintenance, rangers, interpretation/education; 4 law enforcement officers and their chief shared across 3 parks.

Major infrastructure and resources (office, boats, visitor center, etc.): Visitor Contact Station at Salt River Bay, all resources shared among 3 St. Croix national parks.

Major programs: Concession program, anchoring permitting program, snorkeling, invasive plant removal, sea turtle monitoring.

Funding type and source: Federal funding, opportunities for additional funds through research grants, etc. Grants for co-managed projects illustrating multiple-jurisdictional support are the most competitive. With cooperative agreement with DPNR, NPS can pass money to the territory.

What is unique about BUIS: *The* tourist destination of St. Croix as a world class snorkel destination. Still majestic despite 80% coral cover loss. Long research history.

St. Thomas East End Reserves (STEER)

Established: 1970s as Area of Particular concern, 1994 Marine Reserve and Wildlife Sanctuaries

Joined national MPA system: 2012

Type of MPA (no-take, mixed use, etc.): Mixed use. Primarily no-take, except with permit for bait and handline fishing.

Size: 6 square miles

Management Plan status: STEER Management Plan finalized May 2011. Still seeking signature from DPNR Commissioner.

Managed by: Informal co-management by STEER Core Team (DPNR, UVI, TNC, Friends of Christmas Cove).

Number of staff: No dedicated DPNR manager/staff. Informal co-management by STEER Core Team: 4-5 DPNR (partial time), 1 TNC (full time), 2 UVI (partial time).

Major infrastructure and resources (office, boats, visitor center, etc.): None

Major programs: Development and implementation of Management Plan. No other major programs yet.

Funding type and source: Grant funding obtained by DPNR, TNC and UVI.

What is unique about STEER: Example of successful, informal co-management of an MPA in the USVI; Largest existing mangrove forest on St. Thomas; boating and marina hub of St. Thomas.

Salt River Bay National Historical Park and Ecological Preserve (SARI)

Established: 1992

Joined national MPA system: 2011

Type of MPA (no-take, mixed use, etc.): Mixed-use MPA

Size: 1,015 acres

Management Plan status: No general management plan. Do have a cooperative agreement. Master planning of SARI underway.

Managed by: USNPS; Active cooperative agreement with DPNR on co-management of SARI.

Number of staff: 20 total staff shared across the three national parks on St. Croix including staff in resource management, research, maintenance, rangers, interpretation/education; 4 law enforcement officers and their chief shared across 3 parks.

Major infrastructure and resources (office, boats, visitor center, etc.): Visitor Contact Station at Salt River Bay, all resources shared among 3 St. Croix national parks.

Major programs: Visitor Contact Station, MREC development.

Funding type and source: Federal funding, opportunities for additional funds through research grants, etc. Grants for co-managed projects illustrating multiple-jurisdictional support are the most competitive. With cooperative agreement with DPNR, NPS can pass money to the territory.

What is unique about SARI: One of few co-managed parks in the NPS park system. Largest remaining mangrove system in the USVI. Long research history. Looking to re-establish research presence with MREC.

St. Croix East End Marine Park (STEEMP)

Established: 2002

Joined national MPA system: 2010

Type of MPA (no-take, mixed use, etc.): Multiple-use

Size: Approximately 60 square miles

Management Plan status: Operating under 2002 Management Plan; will be undergoing review and revision soon.

Managed by: Managed by DPNR through CZM.

Number of staff: Currently 4 DPNR-CZM staff (CRI Coordinator as acting Park Coordinator, EO Coordinator, 2 Interpretive Rangers); in process of hiring a fifth, Park Coordinator; have historically hosted the NOAA Coral Reef Management Fellow in the EEMP office as well.

Major infrastructure and resources (office, boats, visitor center, etc.): EEMP office, boat, signage, truck, EcoVan, markers, moorings (to be reinstalled at future date)

Major programs: Outreach Program (classroom, bayside tours, EcoVan, community events), monitoring programs (benthic in conjunction with Biogeo and NPS, lobster, acropora)

Funding type and source: Mostly federal funding through NOAA CRCP.

What is unique about STXEEMP: 1st territorial MPA, extensive public participatory process.

Virgin Islands National Park (VIIS) & Virgin Islands Coral Reef National Monument (VICR)

Established: VIIS (land) – 1956, VIIS (marine)-1962; VICR (all marine)-2001

Joined national MPA system: VIIS/VICR – 2009 Charter members

Type of MPA (no-take, mixed use, etc.): VIIS – mixed use – fishing allowed by line and customary fish traps. No spears and no fishing in boat exclusion zones. VICR – No-take except for two allowed harvests (baitfish in HH and Blue Runner on south side, both by permit only).

Size: VIIS – 5650 acres of submerged land, VICR – 12708 acres of submerged land.

Management Plan status: General Management Plans for both park units in process.

Managed by: USNPS

Number of staff: VIIS – approx. 50 total, VICR – 4. Also have two I&M staff and two USGS staff on site.

Major infrastructure and resources (office, boats, visitor center, etc.): VC, boats, offices for five divisions and Superintendent's office, vehicles, maintenance facilities, etc., etc.

Major programs: Moorings (overnight, day-use, dive, fishing, storm), monitoring studies (fish, corals, seagrass, water, air, etc.), interpretation programs, law enforcement activities, research permits (2011: VIIS – 44, VICR – 12).

Funding type and source: ONPS base money and various project monies. User fees collected at Trunk Bay of which 80% are available for park use.

What is unique about VIIS & VICR: Considerable amounts of seminal marine research dating back to the mid 1950s and including the Tektite missions in the 1960s. Representative marine ecosystems from mangrove prop root communities to deep algal plains. Most pristine mangrove prop root habitats remaining in the USVI at Hurricane Hole. Part of the US National Park Service system with all the protection and support provided by almost 100 years of resource management experience. Over 700,000 visitors per year.

Appendix B: Survey Results of Pre-workshop Interviews

USVI MPA Network Coordination Questionnaire

MPA	BIRNM/SARI	VICR/VIIS	STEER	STXEEMP
Agency	NPS	NPS	VI-DPNR	VI-DPNR
Manager	Zandy Hillis-Starr	Rafe Boulon	Anne Marie Hoffman	Paige Rothenberger
1. Please explain what benefits you perceive from being a part of the National MPA System	Adds value, increases regulatory strength. MPAs are the only tools in box (w/DOI) to protect against threats; linkages to other MPAs/other management initiatives; regional perspective; cost-sharing w/ public awareness and training	Being part of the family of MPAs ("brotherhood/sisterhood")	It's a way to connect to partners and seek solutions to issues that might be solved in other regions. It's another opportunity to have access to a networking tool. There is potentially an increase funding sources via recognition. Communication, networking, problem solving.	Increase opportunities to develop professional skills, eligibility for other funding opportunities, training opportunities (National System annual meeting). Will be advantageous if the National System can provide opportunities for MPA education training and resources. Being part of the national system, we can learn from other networks.

Highlights

Funding opportunities, reduces costs of education/outreach, linkages to other MPAs, opportunities to develop training and MPA education

2. What are the benefits you perceive from being part of a USVI Network of MPAs?	The ability for NPS to reflect the ecosystem level; ability to come to south shore; networking and ability to identify "in-kind" boats, and other resources; share staff with other NPS offices. When STXEEMP more functional, the STX MPAs will feel more like a system, within an ecosystem. Will promote the MPA philosophy, practice, policy and spending so that the dollars are in the ecosystem.	Increased communication among territory's MPAs (although it happens organically anyway).	Sets up ability to compare sites. Still don't know how STEER compares to NPS or STXEEMP.	We'd be a unified front on core issues, reinforcing why we are here and can reinforce each other in messaging. It's also an opportunity to consider other structures/mechanisms for PA governance. Formalize the collaborations so that can justify why we need to work together (to superiors).	Ability to look at ecosystem level issues, share staff and resources, increased communication among USVI MPAs, unified voice on some issues and formalize the collaborations to we can justify working together
MPA	BIRNM/SARI	VICR/VIIS	STEER	STXEEMP	

3. What major activities, strategies, initiatives currently happening do you think would be important to share or discuss?	<p>NPS" Vital Signs" document. BIRNM general management plan is in final stages. NPS is making advances on planning for climate change. Lionfish response, bleaching, coral monitoring</p>	<p>NPS lionfish response plan and park-specific plans. SE Regional Climate plan includes education and outreach, planning for SLR and acidification. (nps.gov/climate). NPS has been working on modeling SLR: inundation, geological resources out of Ft. Collins. Lameshur has tide gauge. Work on mesophotic reefs- larval flow with RSMAS. Park contractors as roving groups of lionfish removers and monitoring teams.</p>	<p>Management plan process (CAP), (subset) of stakeholder involvement from the lower watershed.</p>	<p>Sustainable tourism and Management Plan revision. Education and outreach expansion.</p>	<p>Buck Island MP soon to be released, STXEEMP revision, sustainable tourism, lionfish, CC impacts, reef/lionfish monitoring, roving groups of lionfish removers and monitoring teams</p>
4. List any and all of your major MPA management challenges	<p>Enforcement capacity is insufficient. All of these issues are described in the Vital Signs monitoring protocol.</p>	<p>Management options in a climate of decreasing funding and capacity</p>	<p>Enforcement, funding, Watershed management. Implementation of CMSP- biggest conflict has been placement of buoys.</p>	<p>Institutional inefficiencies: political will/interest/awareness on the executive and legislative levels. In this climate, prioritization of PAs will be unlikely. Recruiting and retaining good people who can then experience professional growth as a perk for low pay range, would keep up morale</p>	
MPA	BIRNM/SARI	VICR/VIIS	STEER	STXEEMP	

5. How often do you communicate with other USVI MPAs?	<p>Currently there is an informal means of communication, can pick up the phone to talk with colleagues anytime.</p>	<p>Frequently interacts with Paige (CZM) and January (DFW). It is very important to talk to determine what's working and what is not. Share resources on a needs basis, not in a structured/organized way</p>	<p>Not often, when needed. On conference calls with Paige 1/mo. on certain shared projects i.e. the territorial Fisheries Imitative. Speak with Laurel (NPS) ed/outreach coordination with NPS. While investigating innovative funding solutions, explore what a STEER "Friends' of", would look like, talked with people on STJ.</p>	<p>When needed, or when we meet for other purposes</p>
6. What coordination issues with other MPAs do you experience	<p>Monitoring capacity, sharing resources. There's not enough time and people are too busy to keep up with regular communication.</p>	<p>Vital Signs Monitoring and invasive plant removal. NOAA does work across borders.</p>	<p>There's a lack of interest in coordinating. There are benefits- problem solving (hurricane mooring buoy installation- consultation with NPS).</p>	<p>Easier if a framework or agreement is in place – to justify to superiors- co-management framework. AAUS reciprocity has been an issue to allow everyone to work across boundaries.</p>
MPA	BIRNM/SARI	VICR/VIIS	STEER	STXEEMP

7. What coordination mechanisms will work for you?	Vital Signs monitoring protocol	Calling- just picking up the phone works. Regional (NPS) meetings in which Ian and Rafe are in attendance, they can catch up then.	Because not many people involved (Zandy, Rafe, Paige, someone to represent DPNR for STEER)- set up monthly call one-on-one w each (or staff) to trouble shoot and problem solve. Contact list of who does what (so it's not all Rafe). But need to understand if there are sensitivities and how not to trigger.	More formalized (VICRAG)- website? Facebook?
8. Capacity needs	Need a full-time biologist. Not able to cover all enforcement needs. One interpretive chief, and need more to ramp up education/ outreach in all 3 parks. SARI regs published, just need to implement them, how to measure recreational impact (physical damage from coral breakage via snorkelers)		Staff, boats, funding	Retain staff
9. Management Plan status	Original GMP from 1983, updated one is near completion following approval. MP for Salt River includes recreational use, park research from institutions, commercial activities and education and outreach.		STEER 5 year plan completed in 2009	Revision underway

Appendix C: Agendas, List of Attendees and Output from VIMPAN workshops

Appendix C: Agendas, List of Attendees and Output from VIMPAN workshops

USVI MPA Network Coordination Framework Workshop March 14-15, 2012 Estate Little Princess, St. Croix AGENDA

Meeting Goals:

- Increase understanding of each other's MPAs and other MPA systems
- Provide a forum and communication structure for networking
- MPA Managers generate enough synergies, shared goals and visions to draft a Memorandum of Agreement for coordinating MPA management and monitoring across the USVI's national MPA network

DAY 1: WEDNESDAY MARCH 14, 2012	
10.00-10.30am	Welcome, Workshop Objectives, Introductions, and Review of Agenda <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review results of manager interviews • Overview of National MPA System <i>Jeanne Brown - The Nature Conservancy</i>
10.30-10.45am	Overview of the USVI MPA Network <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Site profiles from managers
10.45-11.30am	Participant Focus, Initial Thoughts and Perspectives <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What could a functional MPA Network do for you, your agency and staff? • What do you see as the benefits to your MPA if you were a member of a network? • What would a network do for your MPA? • What would that network look like?
11.30-12.15pm	Collaboration Activity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do your MPAs already collaborate? <i>Work through spreadsheet in packet</i>
12.15-12.30pm	Afternoon Overview <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review topics that will be discussed <i>Jeanne Brown - The Nature Conservancy</i>
12.30-1.30pm	Lunch at Estate Little Princess (catered)
1.30-3.00pm	USVI MPA Network Communication



Appendix C: Agendas, List of Attendees and Output from VIMPAN workshops

USVI MPA Network Coordination Framework Workshop
March 14-15, 2012 Estate Little Princess, St. Croix
AGENDA

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do USVI MPAs managers communicate? • What avenues of communication are working? • What information is shared? • What communication mechanism(s) will the USVI MPA network use? • What is the most effective way for you, and your team, to stay informed, engaged and excited?
3.00-3.30pm	Guest Speaker Ryan Young - <i>Rookery Bay national Estuarine Research Reserve</i> Gulf of Mexico MPA Network Example
3.30-4.00pm	Day 1 Wrap Up, Review Day 2 Agenda...
4.00-5.00pm	Afternoon cocktails at Estate Little Princess (catered)
7.00-9.00pm	Dinner out (Christiansted)
DAY 2: THURSDAY MARCH 15, 2012	
8.00-8.30am	Breakfast (on own)
8.45am	Hotel pickup
9.00-9.30am	Welcome, Recap Day 1's Discussions, Review of Agenda for Day 2 and Topics and Process for the Breakout Sessions Jeanne Brown - <i>The Nature Conservancy</i>
9.30-10.20pm	Breakout Session 1: MPA Monitoring (benthic habitat, lionfish, etc.) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Defining issues/challenges • Goals or objectives • Activities, steps or actions • Outputs, deliverables, or measurements
10.20-11.10pm	Breakout Session 2: MPA Enforcement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Defining issues/challenges • Goals or objectives • Activities, steps or actions • Outputs, deliverables, or measurements



Appendix C: Agendas, List of Attendees and Output from VIMPAN workshops

USVI MPA Network Coordination Framework Workshop
March 14-15, 2012 Estate Little Princess, St. Croix
AGENDA

11.10-11.25am	BREAK
11.25am-12.15pm	Breakout Session 3: Climate Change Impacts (bleaching, SLR, acidification, etc.) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Defining issues/challenges Goals or objectives Activities, steps or actions Outputs, deliverables, or measurements
12.15-12.30pm	Afternoon Overview <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review remaining breakout session topic and goals for working session <i>Jeanne Brown -The Nature Conservancy</i>
12.30-1.30pm	Lunch at Estate Little Princess (catered)
1.30-2.30pm	Breakout Session 4: Outreach & Education <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Defining issues/challenges Goals or objectives Activities, steps or actions Outputs, deliverables, or measurements
2.30-3.30pm	Synthesize Breakout Sessions and Outline MoA Working session focused on producing a draft Memorandum of Agreement describing the coordination framework for the VI MPA Network
3.00-3.30pm	Guest Speaker <i>Ryan Young - Rookery Bay national Estuarine Research Reserve</i> Phase II: Communication Web Portal: Gulf of Mexico MPA Network
3.30-4.00pm	Workshop review, path to MoA implementation, next steps... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What's my role in the USVI MPA network?



Appendix C: Agendas, List of Attendees and Output from VIMPAN workshops**USVI MPA Network Coordination Framework Workshop DAY 1****March 14-15 2012, 10am- 5pm 2012 Estate Little Princess, St. Croix USVI**

Name	Position	Agency
Mark Hardgrove	Superintendent	NPS-VINP/VICR
Rafe Boulon	Chief, Resource Management	NPS-VINP/VICR
Marlon Hibbert	Liaison, NOAA	NOAA-CRCP
Zandy Starr	Chief, Resource Management	NPS-SARI/CHRI/BUIS
Roy A. Pemberton	Director, DFW	DPNR
Jean-Pierre Oriol	Director, CZM	DPNR
Jamie Kilgo	Biotech	NPS St. Croix
Alex Holecek	APC Coordinator, CZM	DPNR
Ryan Young	MPA Specialist	Rookery Bay
Paige Rothenberger (day 2 only)	Coral Reef Initiative Coordinator	DPNR- CZM



Appendix C: Agendas, List of Attendees and Output from VIMPAN workshops**USVI MPA Network Coordination Framework Workshop Evaluation Responses****Location:** Estate Little Princess, Christiansted, St. Croix**Date:** March 14-15, 2012**Time:** 10:00-4:00 p.m. and 9:00-4:00 p.m.**Coordinator:** Jeanne Brown

Logistics	Excellent	Good	Average	Fair	Poor
General Content	75% (6)	25% (2)			
Meeting Organization	63% (5)	25% (2)			
Handouts	63% (5)	38% (3)			
Facilitation	63% (5)	38% (3)			
Speakers	88% (7)				
Food & Beverage	100% (8)				
Comments	<p><i>The size of the group allowed for free and honest discussion, and allowed us to really make progress in identifying what we want to proceed with collectively and collaboratively.</i></p> <p><i>Loved the lionfish lunch!</i></p>				

Outcomes (as a result of this workshop)	Yes	No	Unsure/NA
Do you have an increased understanding of the other USVI MPAs?	100% (8)		
Do you have an increased understanding of the value, purpose and goals associated with a USVI MPA Network?	100% (8)		
As a result of this meeting, are you more likely to collaborate with other USVI MPAs?	100% (8)		
As a result of this meeting, are you more likely to communicate with other USVI MPA managers?	100% (8)		
Did you increase your knowledge of, and access to, resources relevant to your work?	100% (8)		
Were you exposed to new perspectives, points of view or diverse opinions during the workshop?	100% (8)		
Did this workshop meet your expectations?	100% (8)		
Comments	Looking forward to an agreement that will support a network		
What is the most important thing you discovered during this Workshop?			
The level of collaboration already taking place between the MPAS			
The inter-connectivity of all MPAs and their needs			

Appendix C: Agendas, List of Attendees and Output from VIMPAN workshops

That there is a possibility to create this network across jurisdictional boundaries

That the group of managers are willing and able to move a network forward

That being part of VIMPAN will benefit individual PAs and strengthen and give voice to all PAs in the VI

Would you like to add any information to the sessions?

Need for enforcement presence and signed MOA with VI government

Will like to get more information from the Park Service on concessions vs. commercial use permits, but I can reach out to them independently

Please provide any additional comments you may have:

Use VIMPAN (instead of VIPAN)

Thank you TNC for coordinating this. This is very important for all USVI MPA managers.

Appendix C: Agendas, List of Attendees and Output from VIMPAN workshops

USVI MPA Network Coordination Framework Workshop

April 24, 2012, 9:00am-5:00pm

VI DPNR CZM Conference Room, Cyril E King Airport, St. Thomas

Meeting Goals

MORNING 9:00-12:30pm:

Virgin Islands Marine Protected Area Network (VIMPAN) have a draft USVI MPA Network Coordination Framework with a plan for outreach, enforcement, biophysical and other monitoring, planning and funding.

Advance the drafting of a Memorandum of Agreement and official letters of support to leadership

Attendees: VIMPAN Steering Group, afternoon attendees optional

AFTERNOON 1:30-5:00pm:

Develop strategic actions and work plan for communications of the USVI MPA network for the public and legislators

Attendees: VIMPAN Steering Group + education and outreach support staff and partners

MORNING SESSION 9:00 am - 12:30 pm	
VIMPAN Draft Coordination Framework, MoA and Official Letters	
9.00-9.35am	Welcome, Workshop Objectives, Introductions, and Review of Agenda Review 1st workshop and output <i>Jeanne</i>
9.30-10.30am	Coordination Framework Working session focused on reviewing a draft Coordination Framework for the VI MPA Network
10.30-11.30am	Memorandum of Agreement Working session focused on reviewing a draft Memorandum of Agreement for the VI MPA Network
11:30-12:30pm	Letters for Leadership Working session focused on reviewing official letters informing supervisors and leadership of VIMPAN
12.30-1.30pm	Lunch at VIDPNR (catered)

Appendix C: Agendas, List of Attendees and Output from VIMPAN workshops**AGENDA****USVI MPA Network Coordination Framework Workshop****April 24, 2012, 9:00am-5:00pm****VI DPNR CZM Conference Room, Cyril E King Airport, St. Thomas**

AFTERNOON SESSION 1:30-5:00pm	
USVI MPA Network Outreach and Education	
1.30-2.00pm	USVI MPA Network Communication Overview of the USVI MPA Network Present communications needs and next steps
2.00-3.30pm	BRAINSTORM! Needs Action steps Output/Products Timeline
3.30-4.30pm	BREAK OUT GROUPS Design plans
4.30-5.00pm	Wrap up, closing Workshop review, path to MoA implementation, next steps...

Appendix C: Agendas, List of Attendees and Output from VIMPAN workshops

2nd USVI MPA Network Coordination Framework WorkshopApril 24 2012, 9am- 5pm DPNR Conference Room, 2nd floor Cyril E King Airport, St. Thomas

Name	Position	Agency
Mike Anderson	Deputy Superintendent	VI National Parks
MARLENE CHAMBERLAIN	Asst. Asst. Nat. NPS	NPS
RATE BOSTON	Chief, Resource Management	NIS / UICAR
ALEX HOEDELC	2nd APC Staff	DPNR/STN.
PAIGE RATHENBERGER	Coastal Reef Int. Coord	DPNR/CZM
ROY ROBERTSON JR	Director DFW	DPNR/DFW.
Jean-Pierre Drogol	Director - CZM	DPNR - CZM
Madeline Roach	MP Outreach Coordinator	DPNR - CZM - STNEMP
David Goldstein	NPS STX - Chief. ITE	NPS - STX
Melanie C. Feltnack	VINE Coordinator	VINE
Jonathan Duckey-Swall	CZM Coordinator	DPNR CZM
Anne Marie Hoffmann	STEER Coordinator	TNC
Christine Settar	VII-VIIMS/Sea Grant outreach	VII - VIIMS/Sea Grant
MARK HAMOGBAIRE	SUPN NPS VIUP	NPS - USVI
Zandy Willis-Stan	NPS - Buck Island Reef NM Saint John Bay NHP	Chief Res. Mgmt. Res.



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Appendix C: Agendas, List of Attendees and Output from VIMPAN workshops**USVI MPA Network Coordination Framework Meeting****9:00am - 1:30pm****AGENDA****September 14, 2012,
The Buccaneer Hotel, St. Croix****Meeting Goals:**

- Provide input on communications and interpretation plan and media campaign
- Update on VIMPAN progress since April workshop: MPA meeting in DC? MoA? VIMPAN Letter? MPA activities? Funding?
- Determine content for VIMPAN web page

FRIDAY September 14, 2012	
9.00-9.30am	Welcome, Meeting Objectives, Introductions, and Review of Agenda <i>Jeanne Brown, The Nature Conservancy</i>
9.30-9.45am	Report from Joint Meeting of MPA Federal Advisory Committee and National MPA System Partners, Silver Spring, Maryland <i>Paige Rothenberger, St. Croix East End Marine Park</i> <i>Anne Marie Hoffman, The Nature Conservancy</i>
9:45-10:00am	New Developments – A report from VIMPAN communications contractors Communications and Interpretation Plan: <i>Jenn Travis, outreach/education contractor</i> Media Campaign and materials: <i>Melanie Feltmate, outreach/education contractor</i> Discussion
10:00-10:15am	
10:15-10:45am	
10.45-10.55am	Break
10.55-11.25am	Existing MPA Network Websites – What features would work for VIMPAN? <i>Collin Daugherty, The Nature Conservancy</i>
11.25-12.15pm	Review Progress on VIMPAN Documents MoA, Coordination Framework, Supervisor Letter <i>Anne Marie Hoffman, The Nature Conservancy</i>
12.15-12.30pm	Next Steps Schedule of activities, <i>Jeanne Brown, The Nature Conservancy</i>
12.30-1.30pm	Lunch/adjourn (VICRAG TO FOLLOW?)

Appendix C: Agendas, List of Attendees and Output from VIMPAN workshops

Agendas:

VIMPAN Wednesday, December 19, 1pm-5pm, Palms on St. Croix (coffee and snacks will be available)

1:00- 1:30pm Update and news from respective MPAs- what's been going *ON*?

1:30-2:30pm- Update on the development of VIMPAN logo, site profiles, radio and TV PSA's, VIMPAN web page and internet-based coordination mechanisms

2:30-3:00pm- VIMPAN Coordination Framework document: review, comment, edit and refine

3:00- 4:00pm- MoA between NPS and DPNR: writing workshop-fill in sections, define terms

4:00-4:30pm- Supervisor support letter: review, refine, finalize

4:30-5:00- Check the Marina, wrap up, next steps for 2013

Appendix D: VIMPAN letter of support

The VIMPAN letter of support for agency leaders will be included once finalized with all original steering committee members' signatures attached.

- Letter was not issued -

Appendix E: VIMPAN Memorandum of Agreement (unsigned)

The VIMPAN memorandum of agreement between management authority will be inserted after legal review by each respective agency.

- Will be inserted upon signature -

Appendix F: NFWF MPA Fund Final Programmatic Report

Submitted to NFWF March 2013 for the July 2011- December 2013 funding

Final Programmatic Report Narrative

Instructions: Save this document on your computer and complete the narrative in the format provided. The final narrative should not exceed ten (10) pages; do not delete the text provided below. Once complete, upload this document into the on-line final programmatic report task as instructed.

1. Summary of Accomplishments

In four to five sentences, provide a brief summary of the project's key accomplishments and outcomes that were observed or measured.

In March 2012, protected area managers formed the Virgin Islands Marine Protected Area Network (VIMPAN) to increase MPA effectiveness through improved interagency coordination, communication and collaboration between the Virgin Islands Department of Planning and Natural Resources (VIDPNR), the National Park Service (NPS) and other supporting partners. Together, these managers find solutions to common challenges and ease implementation by pooling resources and working collaboratively. The Nature Conservancy has served as a member and primary coordinator of VIMPAN working to increase the group's ability to improve reef protection by convening meetings, hosting webinars and organizing events to facilitate collaboration, planning, policy development and public outreach. Consisting of the six US Virgin Islands (USVI) marine protected areas (MPAs) that belong to the National System of MPAs, this network forms the first of its kind in the territory to unify efforts, share information, improve MPA effectiveness and implement reef resiliency actions on an ecosystem scale.

2. Project Activities & Outcomes

Activities

☐ Describe the primary activities conducted during this grant and explain any discrepancies between the activities conducted from those that were proposed.

Over the life of the grant, four meetings were held with VIMPAN steering committee and support partners to develop a coordination framework, craft an interagency MOA, draft a letter of support announcing VIMPAN to senior staff, and develop communications and messaging to stakeholders. TNC worked closely with the Gulf of Mexico MPA network in shaping our early activities, and have borrowed from their achievements to inspire our future actions in the USVI. With help from web designers and communications and outreach specialists, a communications and interpretive action plan, media campaign, and web site for VIMPAN was created. VIMPAN is now in a position to both continue active and regular collaboration as well as support broader territorial initiatives such as the Caribbean Challenge Initiative to improve overall effectiveness of protected areas in the USVI.

The first months of this project consisted of planning and preparation for VIMPAN coordination framework workshops. This entailed speaking to people involved in other MPA networks' initiatives in

California (Mary Gleason), the Gulf of Mexico (Ryan Young) and the Florida reef track (Billy Kausey) who have shared their insights on what worked and did not in the process they've been involved in. This helped shaped the specific approach we took on pre-workshop surveys with managers and in designing a workshop to develop an outline of coordination plan for the USVI MPAs. TNC originally proposed to have someone like Billy Kausey and Mary Gleason assist in planning and co-facilitation of the VIMPAN workshops, but after discussions with these advisors, it became clear that Ryan Young, Project Coordinator/MPA Specialist for the Rookery Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve and coordinator of the Gulf of Mexico (GOM) MPA network, was a better fit. The GOM MPA network was exactly one step ahead of where VIMPAN was, having used the same source of NFWF MPA funds to establish a network and then continuing with a second phase of funding to build upon their communications activities.

TNC began with interviews of key MPA managers using a USVI MPA network questionnaire to help identify issues and topics of mutual concern for USVI MPAs, shared interests, and to start to explore opportunities for enhanced collaboration. Results were entered into a matrix so that the MPA managers and stakeholders could see a summary of current similarities and differences. This formed the basis of discussions in the workshops (Appendix B of the coordination framework, attached). Background research on pertinent management documents was incorporated into the VIMPAN Coordination Framework and served to shape content of subsequent workshops. One of the primary activities in the proposal, to compile background GIS that would assist in the development of monitoring plans to support collective decision making, was not completed with this grant. Other parallel initiatives have done this, and working with NOAA's biogeography office, TNC continues to advance compilation of territory-wide monitoring data into a geo-database and build an online interactive mapper on coastalresilience.org.

The first VIMPAN workshop occurred on March 14 and 15, 2012, at The Nature Conservancy's Estate Little Princess. Twelve MPA managers and support partners attended to hash out a coordination framework and determine next steps for the VIMPAN to become institutionalized within each respective agency. Ryan Young was a co-facilitator and was instrumental in developing the facilitation techniques, agenda, workshop approaches and provided great ideas based on what worked and did not work from the GOM workshops. At the VIMPAN workshop, he presented a background of the GOM, led the group through an exercise to determine a communication strategy, and identified parallel issues and solutions from GOM. He shared the GOM communications tools, showing the development site for a GOM interactive web page. VIMPAN was interested in using such a means for communications and saw value in the dynamic aspect of this tool for public education. Immediate next steps from this workshop identified by the USVI MPA managers included putting together a draft of the coordination framework by assembling the outputs from the workshop, drafting letters to their staff and supervisors to emphasize the importance and timeliness of the USVI MPA network, and making arrangements to hold follow-up meetings to draft a formal memorandum of agreement and outline the steps for VIMPAN in education and outreach and other shared activities. Agenda and workshop products can be found as an appendix of the VIMPAN Coordination Framework, attached.

The second VIMPAN workshop took place in St. Thomas at the VIDPNR conference room on April 24, 2012, and included a broader reach of support staff (particularly education/ outreach and interpretive

staff). The primary focus of this meeting was to go over a draft coordination framework and strategize an approach to inform the public, legislators and funders of the VIMPAN. The group began with an overview of the mission, goals, objectives and activities of the coordination framework. There was a brief discussion on the ways forward in developing an MOA with a rough outline and sharing of example interagency MOA's. The best use of remaining grant funding was determined and this resulted in a budget change request to shift focus to communication and outreach. At this workshop, the first sketches of a VIMPAN logo were created.

Using rebudgeted funds, TNC contracted communication and outreach specialists and a web designer. The communications and outreach specialists used the goals and activities for communications out of the April 24 coordination framework and developed a draft list of communication strategies and media campaign, development actions and an interpretation plan. At the next VIMPAN meeting on September 14, 2012, Lauren Wenzel (along with the VIMPAN members who attended the Joint Meeting of MPA FAC and National MPA System Partners held in Silver Spring in June) spoke about some of the key take-away lessons on branding and messaging. The communications and outreach consultants presented different media for different audiences, feasibility and costs for the VIMPAN to narrow down priority outputs. The web designer gathered information needed for an interactive communications and outreach web site, discussed some options for branding and media events, and decided on the website features to include in a member-only workspace for the VIMPAN Steering Committee and direct support partners, an events calendar, news stream, interactive maps and documents.

The final meeting for VIMPAN under this grant was held December 19, 2012. The participants used the time together to do a "writeshop" to polish the letter of support, the draft MOA, a radio PSA script and site profiles. All VIMPAN activities are ongoing with continued support from NOAA's Coral Reef Conservation Program funding. The coordination framework will be regularly updated, improved upon and modified to reflect strategies and actions tailored to adapt to emerging threats, new opportunities, funding and resources.

Outcomes

☐ Describe progress towards achieving the project outcomes as proposed and briefly explain any discrepancies between your results compared to what was anticipated.

☐ Provide any further information (such as unexpected outcomes) important for understanding project activities and outcome results.

The VIMPAN Coordination Framework is a living document, with updates made each time the group meets. In other words, it will never be in a finalized, static state, but rather, adaptive to changing circumstances. This allows the VIMPAN Steering Committee to practice a flexible mode of action while meeting the overall goals of VIMPAN in terms of education and outreach, enforcement, policy and planning, and monitoring and research. With inspiration born from the highly successful first meeting, the VIMPAN members showed enthusiasm and dedication to continued regular planning and implementation workshops. This provides the opportunity to incrementally advance certain aspects of the coordination framework, examine gaps in information and implementation, and develop priority

actions for the near-term. This kind of adaptive efficiency in planning and meeting objectives results in an increase of opportunities for collaboration and mechanisms for coordinating activities across MPAs.

When interviews were conducted with individual MPA managers prior to the first workshop, a common sentiment was that communication already happens when the need arises and organically, without the need of formal avenues of communication. However, it was evident that at each workshop where MPA managers had a chance to sit across from one another, a greater level of synergies were generated that set the spirit of cooperation in motion. The members increased their understanding of each other's MPAs and other MPA systems in the U.S. and now have a forum for continuous communication. The kind of intergovernmental cooperation that existed before (to achieve broader marine resources conservation and restoration objectives) was piecemeal and inefficiently coordinated. With more frequent cross-pollination of ideas, sharing resources and advancing messaging and methods together, the VIMPAN has a unified voice. The development of a MOA further ties the agencies to meeting a shared goal, and provides the enabling conditions for such collaboration.

The web designer helped with VIMPAN branding development including drafting of a set of logos for the group, designed a VIMPAN website as a site for VIMPAN members to exchange information and make information available to the public concerning the VI's MPAs. The website contains the output from the communications and outreach consultants including each site's profiles, the coordination framework, and factoids about VIMPAN with a link to the Google Earth Ocean profiles. A copy of the development site is attached (at the time of this report, reefconnect.org/VIMPAN is not currently live as kinks in interactive web maps are worked out and final touches are included).

3. Lessons Learned

Describe the key lessons learned from this project, such as the least and most effective conservation practices or notable aspects of the project's methods, monitoring, or results. How could other conservation organizations adapt similar strategies to build upon some of these key lessons about what worked best and what did not?

Early collaboration with the Gulf of Mexico MPA network was invaluable to the success of our efforts. Because Ryan Young, MPA Specialist for the Rookery Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve and coordinator of the GOM MPA network had implemented essentially the same project one funding cycle before, information exchange and lessons learned had immediate tangible effects on shaping outcomes. Learning from GOM inspired our approach, agendas, and coordination framework. While GOM was holding their brown-bag webinars, VIMPAN members were attending and gaining benefit. This is a perfect example of how the National System of MPAs enables such collaboration. It also demonstrates that regional MPA networks share core values, challenges and solutions.

From discussions with both local managers and advisors involved in other projects, the greatest coordination issue is not so much finding and capitalizing on similar needs and interests, but having a means by which people can stay networked given their other commitments and limited available time. This was evident in coordination and scheduling with key players during this project. The challenge has been to develop the mechanism that will work best for those within the network so they are able to stay

involved, contribute, and collaborate. To ensure longevity, the group will require a central coordinator to stay active and involved. With support from NOAA's Coral Reef Conservation Program, TNC will be able to continue to play this role for the next several years. However, VIMPAN will need to be persistent in finding solutions for the long-term sustainability of the group.

One of the most useful exercises during the workshops was an activity in which the participants identified ways their MPAs already collaborate. They were asked to work through a spreadsheet to identify, MPA-by-MPA, the ways in which collaboration already occurs or where there were cross-MPA initiatives. They then took turns illustrating what those collaborations were. One poster prepared for each area of collaboration (enforcement, policy and planning, monitoring and research, and education and outreach) with the six MPAs represented in circles on the outer edge of the poster. One-by-one the participants drew a line between MPAs, identified the nature of the collaboration and discussed the project briefly. In some cases, a circle (or spiral) was drawn in the middle to represent regional or territory-wide initiatives that affected all MPAs. When one participant finished creating a link, they passed the marker to the next and the those standing waiting their turn moved up in line. If a participant did not have anything to share, they sat down, eventually leaving only a handful standing. The resulting diagrams showed a spider web of interactions, demonstrating areas already connected, but also clearly illustrating the areas where initiatives could be expanded to include other MPAs. This was a highly engaging exercise that also served to break up the workshop and energize the participants. The round-robin brainstorming helped identify several connections previously undocumented, and illustrate the already high-level of interaction between the MPAs. The resulting linkage diagrams will be continuously updated to reflect new collaborations and demonstrate an increase in shared resources over time (page 9 of the VIMPAN Coordination Framework).

Of topmost importance during this project was getting the letter of support drafted and presented to senior officials and supervisors. This letter serves as an introduction to VIMPAN, specifically asking for endorsement of the members' involvement, attendance and dedication to working across MPAs. Because VIMPAN members viewed this letter and related MOA as a critical piece of documentation calling for and ensuring support for subsequent actions, many a dedicated hour have been spent crafting the letter and MOA. At the time of this final report, the VIMPAN Steering Committee is putting in last touches, providing signatures and finishing the final aspects of the MOA before it goes to each agency's legal review. In order to fine tune the letter and MOA, one-on-one follow up was more efficient than attempting to work out terms as a group. Otherwise, it takes a smaller sub-set of dedicated and focused VIMPAN members who are able (and willing) to slog through the details of drafting and wordsmithing to complete these tasks in an efficient manner. It was possible to advance the coordination framework, communications plan and media development parallel to this effort, but the more arduous official documents have set the pace for overall project dissemination (see the following).

4. Dissemination

Briefly identify any dissemination of project results and/or lessons learned to external audiences, such as the public or other conservation organizations. Specifically outline any management uptake and/or actions resulting from the project and describe the direct impacts of any capacity building activities.

In planning calls leading up to the first VIMPAN meeting of March 2012, the Steering Committee suggested holding a subsequent partner meeting immediately following with a broader reach of participants to help identify those initiatives that outside organizations could assist with. The group generated a preliminary list of local and regional supporting partners, such as from UVI, Park Service, NOAA, US Fish and Wildlife, USGS, and other sanctuaries and MPA networks. However, it quickly became apparent that the VIMPAN Steering Committee needed to build foundation and iron out the structure of the coordination framework before going “live”. As previously mentioned, VIMPAN has indicated that until senior officials and supervisors are made fully aware of VIMPAN via the letter of support and endorse interagency collaboration through the MOA, announcing official status would be premature. Dissemination is ready to the regional support partners as soon as VIMPAN agrees. In the meantime, updates from VIMPAN have been presented at public meetings (e.g., Caribbean Regional Ocean Partnership meetings, EPA or NOAA-hosted meetings, etc.) and media coverage in local, regional, national and international news outlets will be promoted.

TNC will continue to serve as a member and primary coordinator of VIMPAN. Program staff will convene meetings, host webinars and organize events to facilitate collaboration, planning, policy development and public outreach. TNC will maintain the VIMPAN website that provides information to the public and is a workspace for the VIMPAN Steering Committee.

5. Project Documents

Include in your final programmatic report, via the Uploads section of this task, the following:

- ☐ 2-10 representative photos from the project. Photos need to have a minimum resolution of 300 dpi;
- ☐ Report publications, Power Point (or other) presentations, GIS data, brochures, videos, outreach tools, press releases, media coverage;
- ☐ Any project deliverables per the terms of your grant agreement.

Attached:

Powerpoint of representative photos with captions and individual pictures uploaded

VIMPAN Coordination Framework (Version: March 2012)

VIMPAN website snapshot (*this is an earlier development site to illustrate the elements in the website. It is currently offline as we work out mapping kinks in the Google Earth Oceans links and fill information gaps. When reactivated, the VIMPAN map, logo, site profiles, talking points, and most up to date version of the coordination framework will be displayed*).

Gulf Caribbean Fisheries Institute presentation on VIMPAN presented November, 2012 in Santa Marta Colombia

POSTING OF FINAL REPORT: *This report and attached project documents may be shared by the Foundation and any Funding Source for the Project via their respective websites. In the event that the*

Appendix F: NFWF MPA Fund Final Programmatic Report

Recipient intends to claim that its final report or project documents contains material that does not have to be posted on such websites because it is protected from disclosure by statutory or regulatory provisions, the Recipient shall clearly mark all such potentially protected materials as “PROTECTED” and provide an explanation and complete citation to the statutory or regulatory source for such protection.